

Appl. No. 10/720,979
Amendment Dated August 18, 2006
Reply to Office Action of May 18, 2006

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Currently, claims 45-80 remain pending in the present application, including independent claims 45 and 62. In the final Office Action, the claims were objected to under 35 U.S.C. §112. Although Applicants do not acquiesce in the rejection, the claims have been amended in order to remove the language objected to. Also, the claims have been amended to state that the guide rolls are decelerated and/or accelerated using a drive device. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification. Since the above amendments to the claims are consistent in the manner in which the Examiner has interpreted the claims, it is believed that the above amendments do not raise any new issues and/or require any further search of the prior art.

In the Office Action, independent claims 45 and 62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,163,594 to Meyer in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,562,167 to Coenen. Even if Meyer is somehow combinable with Coenen, however, various features and aspects of the claimed invention remain absent from the combination.

For example, both claims 45 and 62 require that certain of the guide rolls in the festoon be decelerated with a drive device during the process. In comparison, the guide rolls contained in the accumulator disclosed in Meyer and the guide rolls contained in the festoon disclosed in Coenen are not in any way decelerated with a drive device during operation of the accumulator or festoon.

Meyer, for instance, discloses an accumulator containing a row of spaced apart rollers on one swingable arm that cooperates with another row of rollers on another swingable arm. More particularly, the accumulator disclosed in Meyer includes an outfeed roller 36, an infeed roller 35, and rollers 70, 71, 72, 73, 78, 79, 80 and 81 positioned in between the outfeed roller and the infeed roller. As stated at the bottom of

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column 4, the outfeed roller 36 is journaled for rotation on an axle shaft 39 by means of two internal bearings 59 and 60. Similarly, infeed roller 35 is journaled for rotation on an axle shaft 40. As stated in column 5, at line 14, the remaining rollers 70-73 and 78-81 are also "freely rotatable on respective shafts". Thus, all of the rollers contained in the accumulator described in Meyer are freely rotatable on some type of axle or shaft and are all made from "a lightweight rigid material for the sake of minimizing inertia". In stark contrast to the currently claimed invention, nowhere does Meyer disclose or suggest that any of the rollers contained in the accumulator are decelerated with a drive device. As such, even if Meyer were somehow combinable with Coenen, various elements of the claims would still remain absent. Thus, Applicants submit that the claims patentably define over Meyer either alone or in combination with Coenen.

In summary, Applicants submit that the claims are in complete condition for allowance. Further, it is believed that the amendments made to the claims do not raise any new issues and do not require any further searching. As such, it is believed that the claims are in complete condition for allowance. Should any issues remain after consideration of this Amendment, however, then Examiner Kim is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned at his convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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August 18, 2006

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